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LAWS TO SUPPRESS ANARCHY AND SEDITION.

The following resolution was adopted at the recent annual meeting of the Missouri Bar Association held at Kansas City, Missouri:

"WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitutions of the several states of the Union make ample provision for changes or repeal through the exercise of lawful methods in fundamental laws of the United States and of the several states; and

"WHEREAS, both federal and state governments have established, and so maintain, ample agencies through which changes in the law or repeal may be effected; and

"WHEREAS, all classes of people have the right to avail themselves of the ballot, free speech, and other lawful agencies, to accomplish such changes or repeal; and

"WHEREAS, the use of physical force and violence to accomplish such changes in the law or repeal are unnecessary and un-American;

"Now, therefore, be it Resolved, by the Missouri Bar Association, in regular meeting assembled, as follows:

"That, the Missouri Bar Association hereby recommends to the Congress of the United States and to the legislatures of each of the states in the Union, the passage of laws which shall, respectively, in substance, provide as follows:

"That, any person who shall, privately or publicly advocate, either verbally or in writing, or attempt to bring about by individual action or by combining with others, any changes in or nullification of our laws, constitutional or statutory, state or national, by means of physical force or violence, shall be punished by imprisonment at hard labor, or, in the case of aliens, by deportation."

In view of the open threats of "direct action" that are being made by certain radical organizations and the more thinly veiled, but equally dangerous, incitements to disloyalty and se-

dition by some of the foreign language newspapers and the organs of the "yellow press," this resolution is most timely.

Where a people are governed by the despotic will of an individual or a political oligarchy, where the right to the ballot as an expression of the popular will is altogether withheld or conferred only on a favored class, where freedom of speech and of the press in the advocacy of government by the people and just reforms by the exercise of lawful methods are suppressed, revolution, direct action by the people, may be the one essential resort as a choice between freedom and slavery. But under our government where the laws are the expression of the popular will as determined by the ballot, one who advocates or attempts "to bring about by individual action or by combining with others, any changes in or nullification of our laws . . . by means of physical force or violence," is the worst enemy of the state. It means the advocacy of the rule of the mob for the rule of law, the negation of all government, or the rule of a despotic minority by physical force, as a substitute for government by the will of the majority through our courts and legislative assemblies. The political demagogue, the radical editor, the labor agitator, who for selfish personal motives takes advantage of the unrest following the war to preach class hatred and stir up the ignorant and thoughtless to violence against constitutional authority is infinitely more dangerous to society than a murderer or a burglar. The law should not only brand him as a criminal, but make the punishment so severe as to be a wholesome and effectual deterrent to others of his ilk. Freedom of the press is the greatest bulwark of democracy. Without it no true democracy can exist. To suppress the free expression of opinion by the press, no matter how radical it may be, so long as it advocates only such changes in our laws or government as may be brought about by the methods prescribed by constitution and statutes, would be a dangerous retrogression, for free discussion of political questions is the very life blood of government by the people. But we are all too prone to confuse such freedom with a license to strike at the very foundation of all government. The last thirty years has witnessed the noxious growth of the "yel-

low press" and now one of its tentacles may be found in any city of considerable size.

Under the cloak of democracy it carries the weapons of anarchy. By innuendo, by carefully worded editorials, by colored news articles, by cartoons, it spreads its venom of sedition and class hatred. Its palpable insincerity and blatant vulgarity make it equally offensive to the taste and reason of the educated and thoughtful among us. But among the ignorant and unlettered, especially the foreign element that know little or nothing of our government and institutions, it finds all too ready credence. It pictures our wage earners as virtual slaves who are exploited by rich and greedy monopolists, our statesmen and politicians, especially the best and most disinterested among them, as pure egoists or as agents of the moneyed interests, always ready to betray the people for their own selfish ends. In the large cities it generally allies itself with the most corrupt political organization, and the citizens who have the courage to fight for political and social reform it holds up to ridicule as hypocrites, or mendaciously imputes to their most disinterested actions the lowest motives. There has not been a president of the United States during the last thirty years who has escaped the abuse and vilification of the vultures of the "yellow press." The proprietors of these newspapers are always very careful to just avoid what will subject them to criminal prosecution. They skim the line but do not quite go over. Unfortunately for the legal profession there are always men of ability in it who will, for a price, prostitute their talents and learning by pointing out just where the line of safety lies. The most formidable weapon of the "yellow press" is the cartoon, for by it the most disloyal and seditious ideas and suggestions may be conveyed without the written word. Whatever the purpose of the owners of these vicious sheets, whether an intense egoism that seeks notoriety and power over the masses at any cost, a craving for political preferment, or merely the malice of a perverted mind, the result of their evil propaganda is very evident, for the noxious seeds they have planted are daily bearing fruit. And what other result can there be when day after day and year after year false ideas of our institutions and government are implanted in the

minds of the most unenlightened of our people, in the minds of millions of immigrants who knowing nothing of us receive as gospel what an intelligent American would discard as a palpable lie. Imbued with these false ideas why should they expect just laws from a congress or a state legislature whose members are merely agents to register the will of the corrupt and debauching money kings to whom the proletariat are merely pawns in the selfish game they are playing. Is it surprising that in their ignorance of our history and government they should be tempted by the pleasing sound of these new phases; "direct action," "Bolshevism," "the rule of the proletariat?" Is it strange that the crop so carefully sown and matured should now be ripe for the I. W. W., the labor agitator, and the demagogue who are openly advocating disloyalty and revolution? The average American of the third or fourth generation has a profound respect for our constitution under which we have grown from one of the smallest to the greatest nation in the world. He knows that ample provision has been made for amendments to it when changes in our social or political conditions require them. He knows that our statutes are enacted by representatives responsible to the people and responsive to their will, and that if mistakes are made they will be corrected when the people demand it. It is almost impossible for him to realize that any considerable number of our citizens can be led by the falsehoods of the "yellow press" or the diatribes of the demagogues to strike at the very foundation upon which our government rests. But with agitation and unrest permeating every section of the country, disloyalty and sedition have become a national menace and there is immediate need of drastic laws to suppress them. The resolution of the Missouri Bar Association should receive the thoughtful consideration of Congress and of the legislatures of the several states.

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